



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO MEET WITH NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT TO DISCUSS PERFORMANCE OF COOPER NUCLEAR STATION

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Nebraska Public Power District on Tuesday, April 8, to discuss the results of the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Cooper Nuclear Station. The facility is located near Brownville, Neb., and operated by Nebraska Public Power District.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Brownville Concert Hall, Atlantic Avenue & Second Street, Brownville, Neb.

Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the safety performance of the plant, as well as the role of the NRC in ensuring safe plant operation.

The performance period to be discussed is January 1 to December 31, 2002. In addition, NRC staff will provide an overview of how the agency's Reactor Oversight Process works.

A letter sent from the NRC Region IV Office to representatives of Nebraska Public Power District addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at:

http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/cns_2002q4.pdf

"Overall, the Cooper Nuclear Station operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety," the letter says. "While Cooper Nuclear Station met all cornerstone objectives, plant performance was within the Multiple/Repetitive Degraded Cornerstone column of the Action Matrix based on multiple White findings in the Emergency Preparedness Cornerstone for more than four quarters."

On August 22, 2002, the NRC completed a supplemental inspection and found that a number of longstanding performance problems existed at the plant. Of greatest concern was the failure to correct recurring performance issues, including problems with the reliability of safety systems, personnel

errors, implementation of the emergency plan, and the quality of engineering, training, and maintenance activities.

On January 30, 2003, NRC issued a Confirmatory Action Letter to Nebraska Public Power District to confirm commitments made by the company to address long-standing regulatory performance deficiencies. "NRC will conduct periodic inspections to verify completion of these actions and the effectiveness of these actions in addressing the specific performance issues," the letter states.

In addition, the letter notes: "As you are aware, since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the NRC has issued several Orders and threat advisories to enhance security capabilities and improve guard force readiness. We have conducted inspections to review your implementation of these requirements and have monitored your actions in response to changing threat conditions. For calendar year 2003, we plan to continue these inspections and conduct portions of the security baseline inspection program, as well as perform additional inspections to evaluate your compliance with new requirements that may be ordered."

Current performance information for Cooper Nuclear Station is available at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/CNS/cns_chart.html

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